

REMARKS

This Application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Final Office Action mailed November 17, 2004. At the time of the Office Action, Claims 1-20 were pending in this Application. Claims 1-20 were rejected. Claims 1, 14 and 17 have been amended to further define various features of Applicants' invention. Claim 9 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and favorable action in this case.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the Background in the present specification in view of 6,039,581 issued to Mario DiMarco ("DiMarco"). Applicants respectfully traverse.

In order to establish a prima facie case of obviousness, the references cited by the Examiner must disclose all claimed limitations. In re Royka, 490 F.2d 981, 180 U.S.P.Q. 580 (C.C.P.A. 1974). Furthermore, according to § 2143 of the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure, to establish a prima facie case of obviousness, three basic criteria must be met. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim limitations. The teaching or suggestion to make the claimed combination and the reasonable expectation of success must both be found in the prior art, not in applicant's disclosure. In re Vaeck, 947 F.2d 488, 20 U.S.P.Q.2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991).

Applicants submit that the combination of DiMarco and the background of the present specification do not render Claims 1-20 obvious. Independent Claims 1, 14 and 17, as amended recite the relationship between the connector guide element and the body of the connector element. In particular, independent Claims 1, 14 and 17 specifies that there is a "uniform gap" between the connector guide and the body of the connector. Among other features, DiMarco and the Background do not disclose, teach or suggest such a uniform gap.

Instead, as previously argued, the "connector guides" disclosed by DiMarco and cited by Examiner would be looked to by one of ordinary skill as a precursor or partial

embodiment of the connector body of a typical D-style connector or other multiple pin connector with a protective outer body. The connector guide elements of DiMarco (see Figs 3, 7, and 9) are shown with a male connector with multiple pins that does not include any type of connector body--instead the connector guides of DiMarco are provided directly on the male connector. Accordingly, neither DiMarco nor the Background provides any teaching or suggestion related to the relationship between the connector body and the connector guide, as claimed in Independent Claims 1, 14 and 17.

Accordingly, the combination of the background and DiMarco cannot render obvious Claims 1, 14 or 17 because they do not disclose, teach or suggest every limitation of the claimed invention. Applicants request that Examiner withdraw the rejection under §103 to Independent Claims 1, 14, and 17 and Claims 2-13, 15-16, and 18-20 which depend therefrom.

ATTORNEY DOCKET
016295.1507

PATENT APPLICATION
10/727,815

8

CONCLUSION

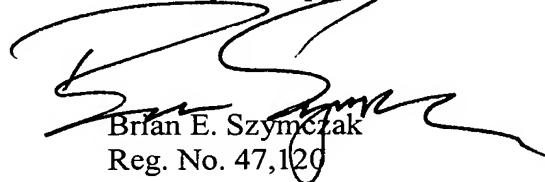
Applicants have now made an earnest effort to place this case in condition for allowance in light of the amendments and remarks set forth above. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of remaining Claims 1-20 as amended.

Applicants believe there are no fees due, however, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees to Deposit Account No. 02-0383 of Baker Botts L.L.P.

If there are any matters concerning this Application that may be cleared up in a telephone conversation, please contact Applicants' attorney at 512.322.2548.

Respectfully submitted,

BAKER BOTTS L.L.P.
Attorney for Applicants



Brian E. Szymczak
Reg. No. 47,120

SEND CORRESPONDENCE TO:

Baker Botts L.L.P.

CUSTOMER ACCOUNT NO. **23640**

512.322.2548

512.322.8340 (fax)

Date: 01/18/05